Rural teachers are confronted with the task of providing appropriate education to exceptional students, as well as addressing the added elements of language and culture issues as these pertain to handicapping conditions. Key points in the identification and instruction of these students are initial referral, early intervention, and appropriate placement within special services. This paper reviews the literature on these key points, focusing on the interrelationship of cultural and educational characteristics. The review concludes that research has clearly demonstrated the significant role played by acculturation factors in the inappropriate identification and placement of culturally/linguistically different students with learning and behavior problems. Research has also pointed the way for modifying the referral/staffing/placement process to more effectively meet the special needs of this population. The appendix contains the "CCDES Acculturation Scale," developed by Cross Cultural Developmental Education Services. The scale can be used to obtain an approximate measure of how acculturated a student is into mainstream American culture. It provides a useful piece of supplemental assessment information and may be used to substantiate decisions to provide intensive learning and behavior interventions for culturally/linguistically different students. The appendix also provides an outline of BISECT, an alternative intervention process developed as a result of this study. (JDD)
REFERRAL, INTERVENTION, AND INSTRUCTION
FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIFFERENT
CHILDREN WHO MAY BE HANDICAPPED

By Catherine Collier, Ph.D. 1988

In an era in which the concept of "pluralistic society" is most evident within
our schools, the education of minority students becomes an important concern to even
the most experienced educator. Teachers in all grade levels have witnessed a
tremendous increase in the heterogeneity of students' performance due, to a great
extent, to the increase in ethnic and multicultural students enrolled in today's
schools. Of equal or greater concern to many classroom teachers is the unparalleled
challenge of contending with limited resources while providing quality instruction to
students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds who exhibit learning and
behavior problems.

Rural teachers with limited resources are more and more confronted with the task
of providing appropriate education to exceptional students, as well as addressing the
added elements of language and culture issues as these pertain to handicapping
conditions.

Key points in the identification and instruction of these students are:
1) their initial referral, usually by classroom teachers ill prepared to meet their
special needs,
2) early intervention at the pre-staffing level to address linguistic/cultural and
acculturation needs as well as separate these from possibly exceptional learning and
behavior problems, and
3) appropriate and accurate placement within special services.

Over the past decade, the disproportionate referral (both over and under
referral and placement of minority children) has become a matter of increasing
concern to educators in public schools. This population is referred to as
culturally and linguistically different exceptional children.

It is evident from a review of previous research that the interrelationship of
cultural and educational characteristics is central to answering questions about
appropriate identification, referral and instruction of culturally and linguistically different exceptional children. It is also evident from a review of these studies that the results of acculturation research have not been considered in this interrelationship.

There is ample evidence that cultural, linguistic, and psychological changes occur among populations which affect their interaction with mainstream American society (Berry, 1970; Pittkin & Berry, 1975). Knowledge about the characteristics and needs of culturally and linguistically different exceptional children is incomplete without a knowledge of the effects of these changes, i.e., acculturation, upon this population. This is especially true in that the effects of acculturation are similar to and may be confused with some of the behaviors for which children are referred to special education.

Children in need of special assistance will continue to be identified and placed in special education classrooms. It is important that all of their special needs be identified, delineating those characteristics of exceptionality from those characteristics of acculturation, for appropriate services to be provided.

A recent research study into this area has examined the interaction between educational and cultural/linguistic characteristics of culturally and linguistically different children experiencing acculturation in rural school systems. The study examined and identified which of these characteristics differentiated children referred for special education placement from nonreferred culturally and linguistically different children. The results and conclusions of this study provided guidance in developing appropriate training for school personnel in the identification, referral and instruction of the culturally and linguistically different exceptional population in the public schools.

The sample for the study consisted of elementary students who were identified as culturally and linguistically different by two rural school districts and enrolled in bilingual/ESL programs in the districts prior to the 1984-85 school year. The school districts were asked to provide information on 100 students randomly selected from
their bilingual/ESL programs. The sample consisted of 105 bilingual children, 51 of whom had never been referred to special education and 54 of whom had been referred to special education. The referred students included 27 referred but not placed and 27 referred and placed in special education within the last two years. The sample was drawn from district wide bilingual/ESL programs serving grades K-6. Students become eligible for services from this program by meeting national and state criteria of cultural and linguistic difference. All of these students were considered of limited English proficiency to some extent and of cultural backgrounds other than mainstream American.

The students were compared on 15 acculturation and education variables selected on the basis of an extensive review of the literature. The acculturation variables were selected from research into the effect of various cultural and linguistic factors upon the successful acculturation of culturally and linguistically different students in this country (Alder, 1975; Juffer, 1983; Padilla, 1980). The education variables were those regularly considered in the referral and placement of any child in special education (Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 1981; Knoff, 1983; Smith, 1982).

Composite scores for the two major variable categories, acculturation and educational achievement, were also considered. A scale for rating relative degree of acculturation was developed based upon the variables and research cited above. A copy of the scale is attached in the appendix.

A review of the literature led to the expectation that within a randomly selected group of school children, those referred and/or placed in special education would differ significantly from those not referred or placed, particularly in regard to achievement and ability. In previous studies, the cultural and linguistic differences between mainstream and minority became an additional factor in whether or not a child was referred and/or placed. In this study, however, all of the children were from the same cultural and linguistic background. As they were also from the same nontransient rural socioeconomic background and age range, it was expected that the children should be relatively homogeneous in regard to cultural and linguistic
variables, with some differences between individual children. In theory, pre-investigation expectations were that referred and nonreferred children would differ on their education profile but not on their acculturation (cultural and linguistic) profile.

Contrary to theoretical expectations, the referred and nonreferred groups did not statistically significantly differ on their education profiles but did differ on their acculturation profiles. Findings also indicated a strong interaction and correlation between particular acculturation and education variables. Although 'academic' concerns were cited as the primary reason for referral, there was no statistically significant difference in achievement test scores in any content area. A significant interaction also was found between minority enrollment and educational achievement.

Differences were found between referred/not placed and referred/placed subjects on selected variables of LAU category, language proficiency, and acculturation. There were no significant differences for any education variable between these referral groups.

Differences were found between nonreferred and referred/placed subjects on the acculturation variables of LAU category, language proficiency, minority enrollment, and acculturation. There were no significant differences between non-referred and placed groups on any educational variable other than degree of teacher concern.

A significant interaction was found between minority enrollment and educational achievement. Nonreferred subjects had higher educational achievement in schools with high minority enrollment while placed subjects had higher educational achievement in schools with low minority enrollment.

A significant relationship also was found between years in bilingual programs and educational achievement. Nonreferred subjects with more years of bilingual instruction had better educational achievement than nonreferred subjects with fewer years of bilingual/ESL instruction. This relationship between high educational achievement and years of bilingual instruction was significant for the entire sample.
population. This was also found to be true for language proficiency. A significant relationship was found between language proficiency and educational achievement for all groups.

A significant relationship was also found between years in the United States and educational achievement. Referred but not placed subjects who had been in the United States more than four years were significantly higher in educational achievement than those who had been in the United States fewer than four years. The relationship between more years in the United States and level of educational achievement was statistically significant for the population as a whole. A significant relationship also was found between level of acculturation and educational achievement for all groups. The population as a whole performed better on educational achievement the higher the level of acculturation.

It may be concluded from these findings that culturally and linguistically different children in rural schools continue to be disproportionately referred and placed in special education, both over- and under-referred/placed. It may be concluded further that the psychodynamics of acculturation are clearly a factor in referral and placement and must be considered in the identification and instruction of culturally and linguistically different children with special needs.

The finding that non-referred culturally and linguistically different children apparently did better educationally in schools with high minority enrollment may be due to differences in the quality of the available alternative programs, including bilingual instruction. It may also be related to the presence of role models, improved self concept, etc. There is also the possibility that CLD children are over-referred in schools with low minority enrollment while under-referred in schools with high minority enrollment. Expectations may be lower in high minority schools or teachers may be less willing to risk censure for referring minority children with learning and behavior problems.

Prior research indicated that differences in educational achievement and overall ability may not be as significant in referral as other education variables, such as
reason for referral (Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1981). The results of this study indicate that rural culturally and linguistically different children referred to special education do not appear to differ significantly from those not referred in achievement and ability but do differ in degree of teacher concern. The implications are that regular classroom teachers need improved training in the identification of learning problems among and appropriate instruction for the culturally and linguistically different. Training in alternative programs and intervention alternatives for concerned teachers is clearly needed. A copy of the alternative intervention process developed as a result of this study is attached in the appendix. Training in this process is currently being provided by BISECT at the University of Colorado.

Research has clearly demonstrated the significant role played by acculturation factors in the inappropriate identification and placement of culturally/linguistically different students with learning and behavior problems. Research has also pointed the way for modifying the referral/staffing/placement process to more effectively meet the special needs of this population.
Definition of Terms

Acculturation: A type of cultural change initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultures. The dynamics of acculturation include selective adaptation of the value system, integration and differentiation processes. Acculturation does not mean assimilation. It refers to the process by which members of one culture adapt to the presence of another culture. This adaptation may be through integration, assimilation, rejection, or deculturation.

Convergence: The interaction of an exceptional condition(s) and the cultural and linguistic characteristics of an individual. The effect of being deaf upon the acculturation of a Spanish speaking child is an example of convergence. Another is differing attitudes within particular cultural groups toward an exceptional condition and the effect of this upon a culturally, linguistically different exceptional child's development and learning.

Culturally and linguistically different: An individual whose native culture is not of mainstream America and whose native language is not English. The individual may or may not be acculturated to some extent and may or may not be relatively proficient in English or his/her native language.

Exceptional: A condition which requires modification of the regular instructional program in order for a child to achieve his/her maximum potential.

Special education: Specifically designed instruction for children whose educational needs cannot be addressed effectively in the regular school program without adaptation or modification.
Bibliography


APPENDIX
Acculturation refers to adjustment or adaptation to a new cultural/social environment. This adaptation may be manifested in several ways: integration, assimilation, rejection, or marginality. The CCDES Acculturation Scale is based upon research on the factors predictive of the degree of successful integration by persons experiencing culture shock.
USING THE CCDES ACCULTURATION SCALE

This scale should be used to obtain an approximate measure of how acculturated a student may be into mainstream American culture. It is not to be used in isolation nor as a predictive tool. It provides a useful piece of supplemental assessment information and may be used to substantiate decisions to provide intensive learning and behavior interventions for culturally/linguistically different students rather than referring them to a staffing.

The scale provides a range from less acculturated (8) to more acculturated (40). For example, an Anglo-American born in the U.S., attending a school with less than 20% minority enrollment, who never switched school districts, who has a high proficiency in English (which is also his native language) would score 35. She would score 40 if she also took language or bilingual classes. An example of a less acculturated student would be a Native American from a community in Central America who has just arrived in the U.S., has had no classes in ESL or bilingual education, is identified as LAU A, is not very proficient in her native language or in English, and is attending a school with over 80% minority enrollment. This student would score 8 on the scale. She might score 12 if she was literate and highly proficient in her native language.

The score guidelines are given in the bottom of the CCDES Scale.

The information needed to complete the scale is:

1. Number of years the student has been in the U.S.
2. Number of years the student has been in the school district.
3. Number of years the student has received direct instruction in ESL or bilingual classes.
4. The LAU category (see attached).
5. Degree of native language proficiency.
6. Degree of English language proficiency.
7. Ethnicity and/or nation of origin.
8. Percentage of enrollment in their school which is composed of non-Anglo-American students.
CCDES ACCULTURATION SCALE

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NAME ___________________________ SCHOOL ___________________________

DATE OF BIRTH ___________________ SEX ___________________ GRADE ___________

AGE AT ARRIVAL IN U.S. __________ LANGUAGE(s) SPOKEN AT HOME __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data</th>
<th>CCDES A Scale Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of years, United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years, School District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years, ESL and/or bilingual education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAU category</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native language proficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language proficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Nation of origin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage minority enrollment in attending school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CCDES A Scale Score TOTAL __________

CCDES A SCALE SCORE GUIDELINES

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<tr>
<th>Number of years, US/SD:</th>
<th>Number of years, ESL/BE:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 1 = 1</td>
<td>0.0 - 1.0 = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 = 2</td>
<td>1.1 - 1.5 = 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 4 = 3</td>
<td>1.6 - 2.0 = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 6 = 4</td>
<td>2.1 - 2.5 = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 6 = 5</td>
<td>2.6 - 3.0 = 5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAU category</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A = 1</td>
<td>Native American = 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>B = 2</td>
<td>Hispanic = 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>C = 3</td>
<td>Asian/Pac. Is. = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D = 4</td>
<td>Black/MidEast = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E = 5</td>
<td>White/European = 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Enrollment</th>
<th>Language Proficiency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0% - 20% = 1</td>
<td>Least = 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>21% - 40% = 2</td>
<td>Proficient = 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>41% - 60% = 3</td>
<td>Most = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61% - 80% = 4</td>
<td>Proficient = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81% - 100% = 5</td>
<td>Least = 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CCDES A Scale based upon research by Adler, 1975; Berry, 1980; Collier, 1984; and Saffer, 1983.
LAU CATEGORIES

LAU Category A -- This student is monolingual in a language other than English

LAU Category B -- This student is monolingual in a language other than English, but may have some ability to comprehend English.

LAU Category C -- This student is considered to be "Bilingual" and is able to understand and speak the other language and English equally well.

LAU Category D -- This student is monolingual in English and may understand very little of the second language.

LAU Category E -- This student is totally monolingual in English.
Building Level

Intervention

Serious Options

1. Classroom management assistance
   a. Academic interventions
   b. Behavior interventions
   c. Social/peer interventions
   d. Other teaching/behavior management strategies

2. Curriculum adaptation
   a. Special education adaptations
   b. Bilingual/ESL adaptations
   c. Cultural/linguistic adaptations
   d. Other curriculum adaptations

3. Psycho/social assistance
   a. Counseling
   b. Support groups
   c. Social services
   d. Social survival
   e. Cross-cultural counseling
   f. Acculturation assistance
   g. Other psycho/social aid

4. Physical assistance
   a. Medical
   b. Nutrition
   c. Sensory evaluation
   d. Environmental evaluation
   e. Other direct physical aid

5. Experiential assistance
   (due to mobility, trauma, etc.)
   a. High interest/low vocabulary
   b. School survival
   c. Metacognitive/learning strategies
   d. Social/linguistic development
   e. "Remedial" basic skills
   f. Curriculum adaptation
   g. Other experiential adaptation

6. "Slow learner"
   a. Developmental curricula
   b. Modification of regular curricula
   c. Assistance to teacher materials, schedule, etc.
   d. Training for teacher/parents/aides
   e. Bilingual tutor with special training
   f. Other learning/coping strategies

7. Language development
   a. First language development
   b. Intensive L1 to L2 transfer/transition
   c. Intensive ESL
   d. First language IEP/ESL IEPs
   e. IEPs in English
   f. Intensive language strategies (IRWIN)
   g. Social/linguistic strategies
   h. Other linguistic assistance

8. Other

Referral

1. Teacher brings specific problem(s) to attention
   of TACIT (Teacher Assistance Child Intervention Team)
2. Appropriate interventions are suggested by TACIT
   and implemented by teacher(s) with assistance from
   appropriate personnel
3. TACIT may include
   a. Classroom teacher
   b. Bilingual/ESL specialist
   c. Special Educator
   d. Chaplain
   e. Counselor
   f. Social Worker
   g. Parent/Advocate
   h. Others

If the problem is not resolved by interventions,
and/or if as a result of these interventions,
new patterns and indications arise, TACIT
may try other indicated interventions
or may recommend staffing

District Level

Staffing

Formal and informal assessment in
regard to specific concern or
suspected handicapping condition,
taking into consideration:
1. Assess sociolinguistic
   competence and language
   proficiency in L1 and L2
2. If primary language is not
   English, assess in the
   primary language
3. If balanced bilinguals, assess
   in both L1 and L2
4. If limited proficiency in
   either language, use sociolinguistic
   and non-language dependent measures in both
   languages
5. Use a multidimensional approach
   by a multidisciplinary team.
6. Various optimization procedures
   should be tried.
7. Review tests and procedures for
   culture specific bias
8. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
   should reflect the total needs,
   including acculturation, culture,
   and language needs
9. Staffing Team may include
   a. School Psychologist
   b. Special Educator
   c. Speech/Language Specialist
   d. Bilingual/ESL Specialist
   e. Acculturation Specialist
   f. Social Worker
   g. Counselor
   h. Teacher
   i. Parent
   j. Others

1. No handicap determined
2. Handicap determined:
   a. Placement in special education
   b. IEP development must include
      1) L1/L2 acculturation
         needs and who is responsible
         for services
      2) Integration of
         SE/BE services/resources
      3) How culture and
         language assistance is utilized
         in meeting special needs as well as
         needs of whole child
   c. Support team may be
      aides, tutors, other resources
   d. Coordinated team may
      be special educator
      and bilingual/ESL specialists
      (acculturation specialist)
      plus other resources
   e. Bilingual Special
      Educator or special
      educator trained in
      acculturation